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The mother, the young wife the Husband, & the men of Nambé, followed the Gov<sup>r</sup>. from the Indian office to his quarters, to embrace & thank him, for making so righteous a Judgment;—and then went on their way to Nambe, rejoicing—

## THE PATRIOTIC RECORD OF THE MANITOWOC FREIER SAENGERBUND<sup>1</sup>

Patriotism roots in tradition, for it is the stories of the sires that rouse the spirit of the sons. It is therefore fitting that in time of war we recall the services and sacrifices of the past and gain therefrom encouragement and inspiration. And this society is most fortunate in its record of service, both civic and military, and especially so in its soldiers' roll of honor.

This beautiful city of ours was once a straggling village, whose river quietly meandered into the lake, unfettered by docks and harbor piers, and whose surrounding hills were shrouded in the verdure of primeval forest. Modern conveniences of light and water, of paved streets and parks, of autos and of movies, were then undreamed of, for those were the days of the simple life.

About the middle of the last century there came into the village and county large streams of emigrants from Germany. They were Americans in spirit before they arrived, for they were anxious to escape the militarism and caste conditions of Europe, and were eager to become worthy citizens of this Republic. They brought with them an inborn love of song and festive mirth that cleared and warmed the social atmosphere of the pioneer community. One of their first united efforts was to organize this Free Singing Society, the "singing society" typical of their German habits, the "free" expression of their American spirit.

They came at a time when the discussion of state rights and slavery was growing more and more bitter and was steadily leading to the irrepressible conflict between the North and the South. Instilled, as they were, with republican tendencies, they offered a promising and fruitful field for the Union sentiment and the anti-slavery propaganda. The news that actual war had begun reached

<sup>1</sup> The Saengerbund, according to custom, still gives concerts once or a twice a year. At this one, a Red Cross benefit, Hon. Emil Baensch made the above address.

Manitowoc on April 19, 1861. And on that very day four members of this society enlisted, followed soon after by three others.

These seven free singers joined the ranks of Co. A, Fifth Wisconsin Infantry, the first company to leave this county. There was Ed. Schindler, who served the full term, until mustered out in July, 1864. Theodore Ruediger remained with the company for over two years, and was then transferred to the V. R. C. Guido Lindeman was with the company over three years, and was then transferred to Co. C of the Independent Battery. Peter Sherfius went out as second lieutenant of the company, and after his discharge was followed in office by Henry Roehr, who had been first sergeant. Both were active members of the society. Gustave Esslinger was soon promoted to first lieutenant of Co. K, of the same regiment, and left the service on account of wounds received in the battle of Gainesville. Charles Pizzala, who had held various offices in the society, resigned from the company after about a year's service, to accept the first lieutenantcy in Co. F of the Twenty-sixth Wisconsin. He was later made captain of Co. G of the last named regiment and was killed in action while bravely leading his men at Chancellorsville.

After the departure of this first company, the organization of a second one was at once agitated. In the summer of 1861 Fred Salomon, one of the earlier members of the society, had been commissioned colonel of the Ninth Wisconsin Infantry. In view of this fact it was an easy matter to gain recruits and Co. B was soon ready for duty. In that company Gustav Bloquelle served his full term, being mustered out in December, 1864. Fred Heineman did likewise, part of the time being assigned to duty at regimental headquarters. A. B. Chladek, long-time secretary of the society, became sergeant major of the regiment and was later made second lieutenant of his home company. Hugo Koch also won promotion to a second and then to a first lieutenantcy and was assigned to duty with the divisional headquarters. Carl H. Schmidt enlisted as a private, passed through the various noncommissioned grades to second lieutenant, then to first lieutenant, and came home as captain of Co. F. Colonel Salomon remained with the regiment about a year and was then promoted to brigadier general and at the close of the war had reached the rank of a major general.

In the second year of the war President Lincoln had requested the governor of Wisconsin to recruit a regiment made up of German-Americans, and the Twenty-sixth Wisconsin Infantry was organized in response thereto. Manitowoc County furnished Co. F, recruited in August, 1862. In that company Paul Leubner served his full term, being mustered out in June, 1865. Nic Roeder served from the start and died in service at Chattanooga in December, 1863. Otto Troemel, who had been the director of the society for several years, was from first sergeant of the company advanced to second and then to first lieutenant, and was discharged on account of wounds received at Gettysburg. Henry Greve's service was similar; starting out as sergeant, he became second lieutenant of Co. K, then first lieutenant of Co. E, and was wounded at the battle of Chancellorsville. Wm. H. Hemschemeyer enlisted as a private and reached the grades of sergeant and first sergeant; he then left the company to become first lieutenant of Co. I, and soon became its captain. Henry Baetz was captain of the local company and in the spring following was made major of the regiment; like his friend Troemel, he also was wounded at Gettysburg. Nicholas Wollmer went out as sergeant of Co. D of the same regiment; later he was promoted to first lieutenant of Co. G; at the battle of Peach Tree Creek he received severe wounds from the effects of which he died. His body was sent to Manitowoc and old settlers still speak of his funeral as the largest ever seen here.

As the war continued, more and more soldiers were needed, and the older men began to offer their services. In the Forty-fifth Wisconsin, we find Charles Korten as second lieutenant of Co. D, and Charles White as first lieutenant of Co. G. In the Forty-eighth Wisconsin F. A. Schenck was hospital steward, and Adolph Wittman was captain of Co. D. Besides those found in Wisconsin's muster rolls there was Dr. Mueller, who had removed from the village, who was commissioned as surgeon and died in service. And Carl Wimpf, who happened to be in St. Louis at the time, enlisted at that place and saw serious service as a member of the First Missouri Battery.

This roll call of twenty-six names makes up a proud record for it represents a goodly half of the active membership of the society. Four of these were wounded and four died in service. None of them were quitters but all remained the full term with their company except,

of course, those who were promoted to commissioned officers, and as to these the record is unusual and it is doubtful whether it is equalled by any society of similar size. The free singers of Manitowoc not only answered the call promptly, and served their country loyally, but by their merit two-thirds of them won promotion, namely ten lieutenants, four captains, one major, one surgeon, and one major general.

And those who remained at home were no slackers. The old minute book records as one of the first acts the release of all soldiers from payment of dues. And then, as the stress of war was being felt, we find entries of preparations for concerts for the benefit of soldiers' families. They appointed their own committees to distribute the proceeds of these concerts, for there was then no centralized body like the Red Cross of today. At every bazaar for the benefit of soldiers they volunteered their aid, and at every Fourth of July and other patriotic demonstration they were on deck. They enlisted the services of the ladies and the children, who picked the lint and wound the bandages, did the sewing and the knitting, packed and forwarded boxes of eatables and delicacies, thus forming a strong and active reserve army of encouragement for the boys at the front. And when the Johnnies came marching home again, they were received with songs of joy and thanksgiving.

And in the early seventies, when times had become normal, and peace smiled upon a reunited land, the children gathered cedar in the woods, and the women wound it into wreaths and intertwined them with flowers. And then the men, escorted by the militia company, marched to the cemetery and placed a wreath upon the grave of every soldier. This society has therefore to its credit the first observance of a decoration day in this locality, and that long before Memorial Day became an established function in this county.

And today, when this country has become engulfed in a world war, we find the society again promptly rallying around the flag. In every patriotic effort, for the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., the Thrift stamps, the Liberty bonds, its members are in the very forefront of activity. Grandmothers are bringing forth their long unused knitting needles, and are smilingly teaching their daughters and granddaughters a well-nigh forgotten art. Under the modern method of

enlistment the sons only have been called to the colors, and in the trenches and in the camps are loyally upholding the honor of their country. And here is the roll call of their fathers:

John Chloupek, Alex Dusold, Theo. Loef, Max Rahr, Louis Schmitz, John P. Schreihart, Emil Schroeder, John Schroeder, Louis Schuette, Fred Schultz, John Staudt, Charles Streich, Jacob Stueber, Gustav Umnus, George Urban, Emil Vollendorf and Joseph Wilinger.

Thus, in the sere and yellow leaves of the old record book we read the story of how the fathers carried the flag and kept step to the music of the Union. And turning to the present we see the ranks of stalwart sons who "have in their hearts the living fires, the holy faith that warmed the sires."

May 24, 1918.